INFLUENCE OF RECREATION ON EDUCATION ASPIRATION

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In the wide context of travel and tourism, recreation plays a significant role in occupying holiday-maker's agenda, so much so that destination is often sought based on recreation activities it offers. Campus recreation for example, is a major component that influences the young when choosing the destination in which to pursue higher education. However, the truly-important-but-often-dismissed role of recreation is perhaps its value towards the intellectual development of youth. This special value is perhaps more apparent if we discuss it in the context of adolescents in a campus setting i.e. the students. This study is an attempt to examine the relationship between these two dimensions. Specially, it looked at the link between recreation and academic aspirations and achievement using a specific student population. Aspiration is measured by looking at an individual's attitudes, motivation and expectation with regard to formal education. Findings from the study indicated a strong relationship between intensity of recreation with aspiration. It is found that the more intense the recreation activity, the more positive the individual's aspiration towards in class learning is. However, the same cannot be concluded for relationship between intensity of recreation with academic achievement. This is because the study found that individuals who recreate most intensely do not show good academic achievement. The same scenario is also true for those who recreate least intensely. Individuals who showed the best academic achievement are found to be those who recreation intensity is comparatively moderate. The study provided several recommendations for the planning and provision of recreation activities in institutions of higher learning and emphasized the need for students to recognize the importance of balancing academic and nonacademic pursuit in their time management.

Key Words: tourism and recreation, youth development, value of recreation, academic aspiration

INTRODUCTION

Although generally known as a pull factor that helps attract people to a destination, the importance of recreation has largely been ignored or downplayed by the society. Recreation is often considered as trivial or insignificant to merit any amount of attention. It is therefore often taken for granted or ignored, so much so that people fail to see the true and numerous values of recreation in our daily lives. Indeed, a deeper look at the concept of recreation, will encourage us to reevaluate the importance of recreation and make us see that its benefits are truly wide ranging. On one end of the continuum, it is a tool that encourages crowds to visit places. At the other, it helps the development of healthier, happier and more balanced individuals.

In the wide context of travel and tourism, recreation plays a significant role in occupying holiday-maker's agenda, so much so that destination is often sought based on recreation activities it offers. For example, people go Maldives to scuba dive, to Hawaii to surf and to Switzerland to ski. For holiday-makers, recreation can take various shapes within a day's itinerary - from casual stroll in natural settings or the more rigorous activities such as windsurfing. Whatever the activities, whether casual or rigorous, the important of recreation as an element of travel and tourism, is undeniable.

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Education tourism (i.e. attracting foreigners to stay and spend while pursuing their academic interests), is now being hailed by many countries as a good source of foreign exchange earner. United Kingdom for example, does all it can to promote itself as an education tourism destination and has done so quite successfully.

Campus recreation is a major component that influences student in deciding his/her university (and therefore destination). Thus, prioritizing design and development of campus recreation can attract more foreign students to get attracted to a university and indirectly contribute towards making education tourism in that particular destination more attractive.

However, to the university management, prioritizing campus recreation may be difficult without an understanding of how campus recreation could contribute to the development of the students – especially in academia. For this reason, this study aims to shed some light on the relationship between recreation with in-class learning aspirations. Working on the student population of Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) where the researcher works as a lecturer, the research took into account factors such as gender, race and year of study of the respondents.

If we examine the specific merits of recreation, arguments for prioritizing it in a campus environment may be more substantiated. Kraus (1997, p.132) had stressed that recreation can ideally be a medium to teach and to promote sense of respect for the environment, avoiding pollution and other types of ecological harm. Another important advantage of recreation is that its stimulates a spirit of unity among different background group of people that involved. Furthermore, social recreation in campus environment is particularly valuable in meeting the needs of specific population group, such as students, staffs and outsiders. At the same time it can be designed to develop close relationship among them.

The special values of recreation is perhaps more apparent if we discuss it in the context of adolescents (in a campus setting, the students). Many psychologists who have done extensive research with adolescents (Bruner, 1975; Diem, 1982; Kleiber et. al., 1995) admit this. Specifically, values of recreation can be categorized into five i.e. physical values, emotional values, intellectual values, social values and spiritual values (Iso-Ahola and Wessinger, 1994; Krauss and Joseph, 1990). While physical and social values of recreation have been widely understood and accepted; much emphasis and understanding is given to the emotional, spiritual let alone intellectual values of recreation.

Examination of relationships (Kleiber et.al., 1995) between recreational habits of teenagers and their emotional development has indicated that self-image of teenagers was closely related to their involvement in school activities. Students with high degree of self-esteem tended to take part in team sports, musical groups, publications, outdoor recreation and social activities. Those with low degree of self-esteem were much less involved.

In addition, extracurricular or other group recreational experiences can offer youth an opportunity for a satisfying involvement with others and provide a sense of acceptance and security that contributes to psychological well being. Gray (1983) found that the most 'popular' teenagers were those who had the spontaneity and willingness to enter games and similar activities. Liveliness, cheerfulness, gaiety, and the ability to suggest or initiate group projects and social events were found to be important elements in being accepted by one's peers. It was also found that athletic prowess in particular is related to such factors as a youth's willingness to rub elbows with others, aggressiveness, and ability to enter easily and freely into social contacts with others.

In terms of the spiritual values of recreation, it has also been documented that the process of recreating provides avenue for the spiritual enhancement of an individual. The term *spiritual* in this context is not defined from the religious context; rather it is linked to the exhibition of humanity's higher nature such as moral values, sense of compassion, respect for other beings and earth itself. It is one's inner feelings to commit to the care of others and to behave responsibly in all aspects of one's life. Nash (1960) put innovating, creating artwork and performing as spiritual-related activities that constitute the highest peak of its pyramid of types of leisure activities. These are the activities in which people find deep-satisfaction over activities they are deeply involved in – emotionally, physically and intellectually (Nash, 1960).

One of the least known values of recreation is the intellectual and cognitive value. Typically associated with physical activity rather than mental activity, recreation is hardly equated as a "serious" activity. But researchers have come to realize the cognitive dimension of recreation values (Associated Press, Washington D.C, 20 December, 1986). As emphasized by Kasim and Dzakiria (1998), recreation activities provide the opportunity for mental expansion through the process of *assimilation* i.e. exposing oneself to a variety of different situations and *accommodation* i.e. adapting oneself to every one of the situations.

An empirical study on recreation and cognitive development has been carried out by Diem (1982) who studied the effects of specific types of physical exercise or play on the development of young children. She found that babies who are exposed to swimming at an early age were better adjusted, more independent and better able to make decisions than babies who are exposed at a later age did. In addition, she concludes that the early swimmers showed higher intelligence in all the tests carried out than did the late entry swimmers.

Keller (1982) also cites a strong positive relationship between physical fitness and academic performance. Nevertheless, she stressed that organized, instructional programs with precise objectives are more effective than non-organized, non-instructional play activities in contributing to academic performance. Harris and Jones (1982) concur to this when they, too found a significant relationship between selected motor performance variables and readings and mathematical achievement in 18 randomly selected Georgia's elementary school students.

Even though organized, formal and instructional recreation engagement have been linked to academic performance, other studies have shown that playfulness also appear to be closely linked to creative and inventive thinking in children. According to Bruner (1975), a study on three to five year olds, the more inventive and exploratory the children had been in their previous play with the "supertoy"(a specially designed toy that permit a wide variety of uses), the higher their originality scores were four years later. In general, the non-exploring boys viewed

themselves as non-adventurous and inactive, and their parents and children felt they lacked curiosity. The non-exploratory and non-playful girls turn out to be non-forthcoming in social interactions, as well as more tense that they're more playful playmates.

In another study, Overman and Rao (1992) examined the participation in organized sports by high school seniors. Their findings indicated that social approval, as a motivation, is inversely related to scholastic achievement. In other words, it is found that students with lower grades were motivated toward sport or recreation activity highly because of the need for social approval than were students with higher grades.

Another study by Kleiber et. al., (1995) examines the ways in which teenagers use their time for "productive" (school and work-oriented), "maintenance" (related to personal care and daily living needs) and "leisure" (socializing, sports, television and similar activities) involvement. They focused on leisure activities that combined the 'fun' element with the need for 'exertion and effort', which they refer to as "transitional activities'. Commenting that many adolescents tend to be bored and disinterested in purposeful and productive activities and have not learnt to find enjoyment in the demands and challenges of everyday lives, they concluded:

> The transitional activities would appear to provide a bridge. They offer the experience of freedom and intrinsic motivation within highly structured systems of participation, systems that require discipline and engage the adolescent in a world of symbols and knowledge outside the self...the enjoyment found within this category of leisure – whether it takes the form of sports, learning a musical instrument, carrying out a 4H project or something similar– lays a groundwork for experiencing enjoyment in a more obligatory adult activities.

These facts indicate to us that teenagers often use recreation as an alternative channel to achieving success in a learning institution. In many ways, recreational experience may contribute to cognitive development, by promoting creative learning and conceptual growth in children. Hobbies such as reading, art, music, nature-related activities offer experiences that may develop problem solving, communicative, and other important personal skills.

A study by Loy (1991) on Mid-western high school boys have found linkage between academic performances and athletic ability. Specifically, the study has shown that at all social class level, non-athletes performed on a lower level academically than athletes did. In addition, proportionally less non-athletes were motivated to attend college. The study also found that non-athletes are five times more likely to drop out of school. In his conclusion, Loy (1991) have outlined that sports participation may promote educational achievement by providing scholarship and strengthening the student's motivation to remain in school.

At community level, recreation has also been seen as way to achieve success. Whyte (1985) in his study on slum youth, found two social groupings i.e. the "corner boys" and the 'college boys'. The corner boys, who like to hang around on the street, have low occupational goals while the college boys were much more ambitious and moving towards success. According to Whyte (1985), the second group realized the long-term benefit of behaving in certain ways and affiliating oneself with clubs and programs.

Apart from values, recreation also leads to the development of varied interest in adolescents, many of which may carry over, into later life. Participation in extracurricular activities may help boys and girls understand their own interests and abilities and begin to make intelligent choices for the future.

METHODOLOGY

Based on the researchers' understanding of several pasts (Kleiber et. al., 1995; Gray, 1983; Overman and Rao, 1992) research reports on youth and the values of recreation, a questionnaire was developed from scratch. The questionnaire measured (1) socio-demographic attributes of respondent, (2) academic performance of respondent (3) recreation-related questions including time allocated and preferred type of activity(s), as well as (4) their aspiration towards in class education (please see appendix B). The operational definition chosen for this study is "recreation as any enjoyable activities students engaged in that provide some form of benefits to them.

Table 1: Results of Cronbach Alpha Estimates

Variables	No. of Statements	Alpha Values
Physical Benefit of Recreation	6	0.914
Emotional Benefit of Recreation	6	0.872
Social Benefit of Recreation	8	0.881
Spiritual Benefit of Recreation	6	0.901
Intellectual Benefit of Recreation	7	0.852
Attitude towards Formal Education	7	0.995
Motivation towards Formal Education	5	0.893
Expectation about Formal Education	4	0.975

Their aspiration was measured using statements for motivation, attitudes and expectations towards education via a six-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A pilot test was carried out on 10% of the intended sample which resulted in the Cronbach Alpha estimates as shown in table 1. A random sample of 375 students was selected from the sampling frame. However, only 278 useable returns were secured. This gives the research a response rate of 68%.

Data Analysis

The analysis began by determining the sociodemographic profiles of the respondent. It is found that a majority of respondents (51.8%) were between the age of 21 to 22. 27.3% of them were between 18 to 20 years of age while 19.1% were between the age of 23 to 25. Only 1.8% of the respondents was more than 25 years old. Female respondents (80.9%) overwhelmed their male counterpart (19.1%) in responding to the survey. However, this does not pose a problem since more than two-third of UUM students population is female. Examination of data also revealed median and mode values of zero and mean value of 0.009, indicating an almost perfect normality.

Most of the respondents for this research were of the Malay origin (70.5%) followed by the Chinese (19.1%), and Indian (6.1%). The remaining respondents (4.3%) were of other races. Students in semester 2 made up the majority of respondents (52.5%). This is followed by students in semester 4 (25.5%). Semester 5 and 6 students comprised of 9.0% of the total respondents respectively. Very few students in semester 1 (1.1%), Semester 7 (0.4%) and Semester 10 (0.4%) responded to the survey.

From the total respondents, 246 students (88.5%) had the tendency to engage in recreation activities while 32 others (11.5%) did not. Cross-tabulation on the 246 indicated that intensity of recreation (by occurrence) for females differ significantly from that of their male counterpart (Pearson Chi-Square value of .020). Similarly, year of study also indicates a significant difference in intensity by occurrence between each of the categories (Pearson Chi Square value of 0.28). However, other sociodemographic factors including race and age do not show similar results.

Preliminary look at the mean scores of the two categories of respondents i.e. those who like to recreate and those who do not, revealed that in terms of their academic aspiration i.e. their motivation, attitude and expectation towards education, those who like to recreate tend to be more positive towards education compared to those who dislike to recreate (table 2).

Table 2: Mean Scores of Education Aspiration Between Students who Recreate and Students who Do Not

Group Statistics				
	Like Recreation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Motivation	no	32	2.3500	.7021
	yes	246	2.1833	.8361
Attitude	no	32	2.5024	.7537
	yes	246	2.3733	.7464
Expectation	no	32	1.9609	.7702
	yes	246	1.8508	.8877

Next, their academic performances were measured by soliciting information about their Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) and whether they had ever been an "LB" students i.e. those whose performance were labeled as a 'pass with condition' by their respective lecturers. From the sample, a majority of the respondents reported CGPAs of between 2.0 to 3.0. Approximately 21% of them had CGPA of between 3.0 to 4.0 while 5.0% had CGPA s of between 1.0 to 2.0. Only one respondent reported a CGPA of less than 1.0. A huge majority (91.4%) claimed that they had never been labeled an "LB" student while 8.6% admitted to it.

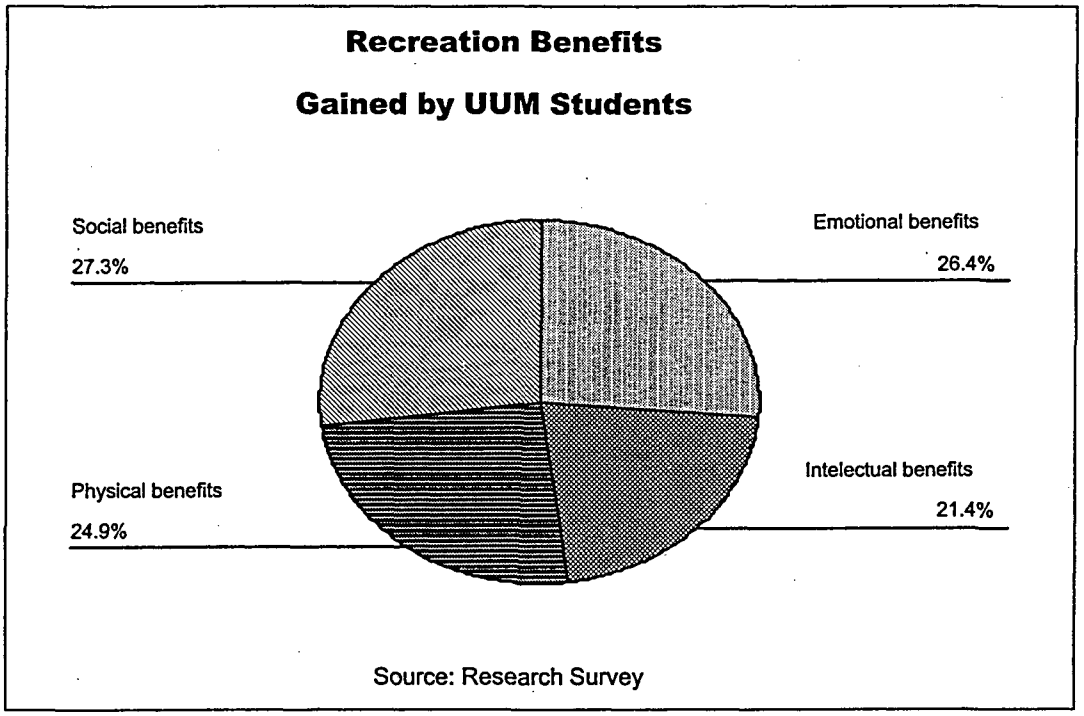
Chi-Square analysis to find if there is significant difference in the type of recreation activity they most engaged in, with regard to each of the sociodemographic factor indicate that where age is concern, there isn't any significant difference between the intensity of recreation of the 18 to 20 year olds, 21 to 22 year olds, 23 to 25 year olds or those who are more than 25 years old (Pearson Chi-

Square = 0.463). Analysis on the difference in occurrence (how often they recreate) for each age categories also indicated no significant difference (Pearson Chi-Square = 0.451). The same findings were obtained with regard to the duration (how long each activity last) of each age categories Pearson Chi-Square = 0.618).

The data was also analyzed to find if there is any specific type of benefit (physical, social, spiritual, emotional or intellectual) that students derived most from their recreation engagement in UUM. Interestingly enough, the findings indicate UUM recreation resources are able to almost equally provide four out of the five types of benefits i.e physical benefit, social benefit, emotional benefit and intellectual benefit (see figure 1). The resources however, appeared to be unable to inspire the students spiritually (0%).

Next, their academic performances were measured by soliciting information about their Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) and whether they had ever been an "LB" students i.e. those whose performance were labeled as a 'pass with condition' by their respective lecturers. From the sample, a majority of the respondents reported CGPAs. Of between 2.0 to 3.0. Approximately 21% of them had CGPA of between 3.0 to 4.0 while 5.0% had CGPA s of between 1.0 to 2.0. Only one respondent reported a CGPA of less than 1.0. A huge majority (91.4%) claimed that they had never been labeled an "LB" student while 8.6% admitted to it.

Figure 1: Types of Benefits Derived from Recreation Engagement



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Analysis to find if there is any significant difference between each CGPA groups with regard to their recreation

engagement intensity revealed that there is no significant difference from the perspectives of recreation type and occurrence of recreation. However, if we look at duration i.e. how much time they allocate for recreation then there appear to be a significant difference in intensity by duration (Pearson Chi-Square = 0.02) for each CGPA groups. (Please refer to table 4).

There is no significant difference among respondents from different ethnic background in terms of length of time spent for recreational activities (Pearson Chi-Square = .214) and how often they recreate (Pearson Chi-Square = .579). Similarly, age did not pose as a differentiating factor for the duration (Pearson Chi-Square = .618) and occurrence (Pearson Chi-Square = .451) of recreation among respondents. Variables of occurrence and duration of recreation were also crosstabulated with CGPA variables to see if there are significant difference between those who score highly on their CGPA and those who do not. The result indicates that there is a significant difference in terms of duration (Pearson Chi-Square = .004) but not in terms of occurrence (Pearson Chi-Square = .416). Table 4 summarizes these findings.

Table 3: Difference of Preferred Type of Recreation between Gender

			Gender	
			male	female
Type of Recreation	type 1	% within Gender	35.8%	10.7%
	type 3	% within Gender	3.8%	4.9%
	type 4	% within Gender	30.2%	30.2%
	type 7	% within Gender	3.8%	2.7%
	type 8	% within Gender	13.2%	33.3%
	type 10	% within Gender	3.8%	1.8%
	type 13	% within Gender		.4%
	type 14	% within Gender	1.9%	.4%
	type 15	% within Gender	1.9%	1.3%
	type 18	% within Gender		1.3%
	irrelevant	% within Gender	5.7%	12.9%

Pearson Chi-Square = .001

Table 4: Intensity of Recreation by Duration for Each CGPA Group

Count

		DURATION				
		< 1 hour	1>X<2 hours	2 >X< 3 hours	> 3 hours	Total
CGPA GROUP	less than 1.0				1	1
	between 1.0 to 2.0	7	5			12
	between 2.0 to 3.0	51	87	32	11	181
	between 3.0 to 4.0	17	29	4	2	52
Total		75	121	36	14	246

On the influence of recreation on education aspiration, there appear to be a positive and strong correlation between duration (coefficient = .53; 2-tail significance = .043) and occurrence (coefficient = .49; 2-tail significance = .036) of recreation with students attitude towards formal education.

Analysis on correlation between another measure of aspiration i.e. motivation with duration and occurrence of recreation also yield strong and positive results. Correlation between motivation and duration of recreation activity gives out the coefficient of .60 with 2-tail significance of .047. Correlation between motivation and occurrence of duration activity yields coefficient of .62 and 2-tail significance of .028.

However, correlation between expectation as a measure of aspiration with the two variables for intensity (duration and occurrence) shows a weak (although still positive) correlation. To be specific, correlation between expectation with duration have the coefficient of .13 and 2-tail significance of .078. Similarly, correlation between expectation with occurrence of recreation activity yields coefficient of .09 and 2-tail significance of .06.

To make an initial assessment on respondents' education aspiration, a t-test for equality of means was carried out to determine if those who like to recreate have different aspiration from those who do not. As indicated in table 5, the two types of respondents did not differ significantly in terms of any of the aspiration's measurement.

Table 5: Attitude, Motivation and Expectation towards Education between Students who Like to Recreate and Those who Do Not

Independent Samples Test

	Statistics				
	t-test for Equality of Means				
				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Dependent Variables	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Attitude	.363	.1302	.1415	-.1559	.4163
Expectation	.459	.1101	.1474	-.1873	.4076
Motivation	.224	.1667	.1351	-.1057	.4390

To determine if sociodemographic profiles of respondents makes a different on the relationship between type, duration and occurrence of recreation activity and education aspiration, the data was recorded to enable the use stepwise regression analysis (see Ahmad Mahdzan, 1997, Norusis, 1991) on each of the dependent variables (attitude, motivation, expectation) for each of the sociodemographic factors. The final results indicate that age, gender and race factors do not influence the relationship between recreation and education aspiration.

However, respondents' year of study appeared to have an influence on the relationship between recreation and education aspiration. Specifically, for students in semester 5, a strong and positive relationship appear to exist between the type of recreation they engaged in with their attitudes towards formal education (please refer to table 6).

As for semester 6 students, a strong and positive relationship appeared to exist between how often they recreate with their attitude towards education (please refer to table 7). However, in both cases, duration of recreation activities did not appear to have any significant influence on students' attitude towards education.

Regression analysis also revealed that for semester 5 students, there appeared to be a strong relationship between the type of recreation they were engaged in, with their motivation towards formal education (please refer to table 8). However, the same was not true where Semester 6 is concerned. Occurrence and duration of recreation activities also appeared to have no bearings on any of the education aspiration's measurement for both semesters.

Table 6: Influence of Recreation on Attitude towards Education Value and Significance of R for Semester 5 Students

Model Summary

Model	R Semester = 5 (Selected	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.568[a]	.323	.293	.7111

a. Predictors: (Constant), Type of recreation

ANOVA[b,c]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.545	1	5.545	10.967	.003
	Residual	11.629	23	.506		
	Total	17.174	24			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Type of recreation
b. Dependent Variable: Attitude
b. Selecting only cases for which Semester = 5

Coefficients [a,b]

Model		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)		6.602	.000
	Type of recreation	.568	3.312	.003

a. Dependent Variable: Attitude
b. Selecting only cases for which Semester = 5

Table 7: Influence of Recreation on Attitude towards Education Value and Significance of R for Semester 6 Students

Model Summary

Model	R Semester = 6 (Selected)	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.463[a]	.214	.180	.7117

a. Predictors: (Constant), How often

ANOVA[b,c]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.173	1	3.173	6.264	.020
	Residual	11.649	23	.506		
	Total	14.821	24			

a. Predictors: (Constant), How often
b. Dependent Variable: Attitude
c. Selecting only cases for which Semester = 6

Coefficients [a,b]

Model		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)		12.523	.000
	How often	-.463	-2.503	.020

a. Dependent Variable: Attitude
b. Selecting only cases for which Semester = 6

Table 8: Influence of Recreation Type on Motivation towards Education Value and Significance of R for Semester 5 Students

Model Summary

Model	R Semester = 5 (Selected	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.480[a]	.230	.197	.8712

a. Predictors: (Constant), Type of recreation

ANOVA [b,c]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.227	1	5.227	6.887	.015
	Residual	17.455	23	.759		
	Total	22.682	24			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Type of recreation
b. Dependent Variable: Motivation
c. Selecting only cases for which Semester = 5

Coefficients [a,b]

Model		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)		4.222	.000
	Type of recreation	.480	2.624	.015

a. Dependent Variable: Motivation
b. Selecting only cases for which Semester = 5

DISCUSSION ON MAJOR FINDINGS

Age did not appear to have an influence on any in how often students recreate, nor did it have an effect on the length of time students allocate for recreation. Age also did not influence the type of recreational activities students engage in. Ethnic background of respondents also did not appear to have any bearing on how often or how long they recreate. However, gender appeared to influence the kinds of recreation engagement students engaged in. The implication for this is that perhaps gender factor should be taken into consideration in the design and planning of co-curricular activities.

Interestingly, as indicated in Table 4, duration of recreation engagement appeared to have some bearings on

the students CGPA. To be specific, the one respondent who indicated CGPA of less than 1.0 preferred to recreate for more than 3 hours at a time. In contrast, students whose CGPAs are between 3.0 to 4.0 tend to recreate moderately i.e. between 1 to 2 hours only at a time. This may indicate that while recreation may have good influence on students, too much recreation can instead be detrimental.

Another interesting finding is that resources in UUM appeared to be successful in stimulating students physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially. However, the resources failed to provide spiritual value for these students. This may be a cause of concern as spiritual development is an important element especially for young people. Hopefully this finding will encourage UUM recreation planners to think of new resources (or programs) that could stimulate students spiritually.

Looking at the correlation analysis, the following conclusions may be derived:

a. The more often they recreate, and the longer time they recreate, the more positive their attitudes towards formal education is

b. Students who recreate more often and much longer, also have higher motivation towards formal education

c. However, the same cannot be concluded for expectation. Although expectation still correlate positively with recreation occurrence and duration, the value generated is quite small. In other words, the correlation is a weak one.

From these observations, it is evident that recreation has quite strong positive bearings on students' attitude, motivation and expectation towards formal education. This reinforces the notion that recreation is important in shaping positive aspiration towards formal education. Therefore, the call to adequately provide and enhance recreation resources and services in institutes of higher learning is justified.

The study had also found those sociodemographic factors such as age, gender and race have no bearings on the relationship between intensity of recreation engagement and aspiration towards formal education. However, looking at the semester of study, semester 5 was singled out as having an influence on the relationship between type of activities they engaged in as their education aspiration. Semester 6 was singled out as having an influence on the relationship between the occurrence of recreation activity and academic aspiration. Of course, this phenomenon is best described after a more thorough investigation is carried out. However, if common sense dictates, an explanation for this scenario could be the fact that for semester 5 onwards, students are no longer forced to do compulsory co-curricular activities. Instead, they can engage in recreation on a more voluntary basis. The feeling of not being forced or dictated may have some influence on students. In other words, only voluntary, personally enjoyable and rewarding recreation activities may have positive effect on the students. This finding supports Kraus's (1990) contention that:

> "Recreation is dependent on the state of mind or attitude; it is not so much *what* one does as the reason for doing it, but the way the individual *feels* about the activity, that makes it recreation." (P.43)

RECOMMENDATION

Base on the findings, this study would like to suggest several recommendations. These would be divided into two sections i.e. recommendation to the administrators of institutes of higher learning and recommendations to students.

To the administrators of institute of higher learning, we would like to recommend the following:

a. Recreation resources and services for students must continue to be a priority for the administrators

b. Since recreation do have positive influence on students' academic aspiration, an attempt to utilize it as a means to boost students' academic performance must be preceded by addressing and mitigating external negative factors such as non-conducive learning environment

c. A look at the provision and management of co-curricular activities may be necessary in order to make the activities more fun and less 'dictating' to students. This may influence students to view the activities more positively and not consider it as a burden, and

d. Establishing new and innovative resources and/or programs that could provide spiritual values to students may be worth considering.

However, it is noted that administrator's effort in adequately providing recreation resources may be useless if the students themselves fail to recognize the value of recreation in their academic aspiration and continue to allude themselves from recreation activities engagement. Thus, to students, the following recommendations may be worth considering:

a. Engaging in recreation may positively change one's attitude, motivation and expectation towards formal education. Therefore, to recreate is better than to not recreate.

b. Recreation engagement, although good, needs to be moderate. Recreating for too long of a time and too often may negatively affect one's ability to perform well academically.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The positive relationship between recreation and education aspiration found in this study reinforces the need for institutes of higher learning to at least consider providing more and better recreation opportunities to its client i.e. the students. Having students who are more inclined towards education is 'a work half done' for the lecturers and the university itself. Therefore, provision of recreation avenues, opportunities and diversity must be given priority.

In addition to providing facilities and opportunities, marketing the benefits of (moderate) recreation engagement to students at large is also essential. Facilities will be wasted if there are no one to use it. Therefore, students must be made to realize that recreation is not 'a waste of time' or pointless. They must be made aware of the possible influence recreation could have towards their outlook in life.

Combination of provision of recreation resources and opportunities, with students' awareness and willingness to participate, may help an institution achieve its goal to produce healthy, happy and balanced individuals who would one day lead the nation towards a better future.

Finally, as this study only looked at relationship between recreation and education aspiration, it is suggested that future research try to explore this relationship in terms of students' actual academic achievement. Such research will definitely shed the light on whether recreation can contribute significantly and positively to a student's academic performance. This information may be vital for institutions of higher learning to decide the place for recreation in its planning.

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